

II. AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

Claim 1. (previously presented) A tool carrier configured for resting on the top of a step ladder, the tool carrier comprising:

- a) a generally rectangular top panel;
- b) a skirt having planar front and back panels and trapezoidal side panels extending downwardly from respective portions of the top panel, the edge portions of the adjacent panels being interconnected with one another, the front, back and side panels having lower edges at equal distance below the top panel for supporting the tool carrier in an upright position on a horizontal surface;
- c) a handle connected into position above the top panel;
- d) a plurality of tool-receiving pockets connected to the skirt; and
- e) elastic members interconnecting adjacent panels for resilient expansion and contraction therebetween, the elastic members extending across said interconnected edge portions of adjacent panels.

Claim 2. (original) The tool carrier as defined in claim 1 in which the lower edges of said front, back and side panels extend continuously between adjacent interconnected panels to define a continuous, generally rectangular lower skirt perimeter at said constant distance from the top panel.

Claim 3. (cancelled)

Claim 4. (previously presented) The tool carrier as defined in claim 1 further comprising a frame structure connected to at least one of said top panel and an upper portion of said skirt to assist in supporting the tool carrier in an upright position on a horizontal surface.

Claim 5. (original) The tool carrier as defined in claim 4 in which said frame structure includes one of (i) front and back frame members, and (ii) side frame members, connected to associated ones of said panels.

Claim 6. (previously presented) A tool carrier configured for resting on the top of a step ladder, the tool carrier comprising:

- a) a generally rectangular top panel;
- b) a semi-rigid skirt depending downwardly from the top panel, the skirt having front, back and side panels cooperative to define a lower perimeter configured to support the tool carrier in an upright position on a horizontal surface, the edge portions of the adjacent panels being interconnected with one another;
- c) elastic members further interconnecting all adjacent edges of the panels such that the panels are moveable in relation to one another for resilient expansion and contraction of the skirt, the elastic members extending across said interconnected edge portions of adjacent panels; and
- d) a plurality of tool-receiving pockets connected to the skirt.

Claim 7. (original) The tool carrier as defined in claim 6 further comprising a handle connected into position above the top panel.

Claim 8. (previously presented) The tool carrier as defined in claim 6 further comprising a frame structure connected to at least one of said top panel and an upper portion of said skirt to assist in supporting the tool carrier in an upright position on a horizontal surface.

Claim 9. (original) The tool carrier as defined in claim 8 in which said frame structure includes one of (i) front and back frame members and (ii) side frame members, connected to associated ones of said panels.

Claim 10. (currently amended) A tool carrier configured for positioning on the top of a step ladder, the tool carrier comprising:

- a) a generally rectangular top panel,
- b) a skirt depending downwardly from the top panel, the skirt having planar front and back panels and trapezoidal side panels extending downwardly from respective ~~edge~~-portions of the top panel ~~to define a generally horizontal lower perimeter~~, adjacent edge portions of the panels being interconnected with one another;
- c) a frame structure connected to at least one of the top panel and the upper portion of the skirt, ~~and the frame structure having a lower perimeter generally coincident with the lower perimeter of the skirt for cooperatively supporting the tool carrier in an upright position on a horizontal surface[[,]] the lower perimeters of the skirt and frame structure being open in the interior thereof when viewed from below for sliding snugly over and onto the top of a step ladder; and~~
- d) a plurality of tool-receiving pockets connected to the skirt, and
- e) elastic members interconnecting adjacent ones of one of (i) said frame members and (ii) said panels such that the frame members and associated panels are moveable together and in relation to adjacent ones of said frame members and associated panels for expansion and contraction of the skirt.

Claim 11. (original) The tool carrier as defined in claim 10 further comprising a handle connected into position above the top panel.

Claim 12. (currently amended) The tool carrier as defined in claim 10 in which said frame structure includes one of (i) front and back frame members and (ii) side frame members, connected ~~independently~~ to associated ones of said panels.

Claim 13. (currently amended) The tool carrier as defined in claim 12 in which said frame structure includes top, front, back and side frame members connected ~~independently~~ to associated ones of said panels.

Claim 14. (canceled)

Claim 15. (currently amended) The tool carrier as defined in claim 10 ~~14~~ further comprising folded material portions connected between adjacent panels.

Claim 16. (canceled)

Claim 17. (canceled)

Claim 18. (canceled)

Claim 19. (canceled)

Claim 20. (previously presented) A tool carrier configured for resting on the top of a step ladder, the tool carrier comprising:

- a) a generally rectangular top panel;
- b) a skirt depending downwardly from the edges of the rectangular top panel, the skirt comprising front and back panels and two opposite trapezoidal side panels extending downwardly from respective front, back and opposite side edge portions of the top panel, adjacent edge portions of the panels being interconnected to one another to establish a generally closed skirt with a lower perimeter configured to support the tool carrier in an upright position on a horizontal surface;
- c) a handle connected into position above the top panel;
- d) a pair of elongated, generally parallel pockets connected to one of the side panels of the skirt; and
- e) a removable tool holder with a tool-supporting surface and a pair of elongated, generally parallel legs connected to the tool-supporting surface and slidably but snugly received into the pockets.

Claim 21. (previously presented) The tool carrier as defined in claim 20 in which the tool holder includes a ring oriented with its axis extending vertically, and having an open upper end establishing said tool-supporting surface.

Claim 22. (previously presented) The tool holder as defined in claim 21 in which the ring is provided with a closed bottom that establishes an alternate tool-supporting surface.